The Lincoln College Group

Lincoln College Higher Education

LINCOLN COLLEGE

TEF YEAR 4 PROVIDER SUBMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

Lincoln College

Lincoln College is a large general further education (GFE) college with over 11,000 students across three campuses in Lincoln, Newark and Gainsborough. In addition to campus-based delivery the College also offers programmes within the community and the workplace. The College is part of the Lincoln College Group which currently includes two Colleges in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and International delivery in mainland China. Overall recruitment analysis of the UK campuses shows that the proportion of students from minority ethnic heritage groups is approximately 28% by number of leavers. The population by gender for all provision at the College in 2017/18 was 47% female and 53% male, with 20% of classroom based students having declared a learning difficulty, disability or reported health problem.

Higher Education (HE) is delivered predominantly from the Lincoln campus with 483 students in 2018/19 split across full (58%) and part time (42%). The HE curriculum offer comprises of Honours Degrees, Foundation Degrees and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas with validations from five partner institutions: the University of Hull, the Open University, Bishop Grosseteste University, the University of Lincoln and Pearson. The range of subject areas is strategically broad so as to provide progression for our FE learners and to meet local labour market demands with courses available in Engineering, Sport, Business and Management, Teacher Training, Computer Science, Lens-Based Media, Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture. Development work is currently underway for new provision in Animal Care and Equine, Tourism and Hospitality Management and postgraduate vocational provision in Herbal Medicine for 2019/20.

Our mission:

To add social value to our communities by providing high quality teaching and learning to meet the personal and professional development needs of our students and to provide work-ready people for local employers

Our strategic vision for HE is to establish Lincoln College as a centre with a reputation for innovative, highly rated and valued provision of higher education and skills.

By 2020, Lincoln College's centre for higher education and skills will:

- Provide a broad and diverse curriculum that offers multiple pathways of progression for all students from level 4 to level 7 via a range of flexible and distributed learning models.
- Enhance graduate employability by continuing to develop a wide range of 'Career Degrees' across multiple sector skills areas.
- Embrace and continually develop innovative learning, assessment and teaching methods to provide a high quality academic student experience that is valued by the students and recognised by the Teaching Excellence Framework.
- Continue to develop strong working relationships with local, national and international employers to ensure high quality employer-responsive provision.
- Continue to work collaboratively with our HEI partners to offer models of co-delivery and direct progression in order to support Lincoln College graduates to advance onto postgraduate study.
- Be actively involved in scholarly activity and knowledge generation to continually enhance the quality of our provision, maintain staff expertise and engage students with / from the wider community.

Demographic context

2017 data from the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLEP) shows that 37.7% of students stayed within the area for both HE study and subsequent employment (7.7% higher than the national average). 23.7% of students moved to a different LEP area to study but retuned to Greater Lincolnshire for employment, 30.1% left the

LEP area to study but did not return and 8.4% of students studied in the LEP area but gained employment elsewhere. This data suggests that 61.1% of graduates employed within the GLEP area originate from Greater Lincolnshire, although only 46.1% of students chose to study here.

According to the Greater Lincolnshire Area Review (2017) the percentage of individuals with a HE qualification in Lincolnshire is 8.3% lower than the national average, with the largest gap of 13.5% in the North East Lincolnshire district. The national statistics for participation rates in Higher Education show a 2% increase from 2014/15 to 2016/17 across the East Midlands. This is 8% lower than the national participation rate (at 50%), however, and these figures also show that only 4% of entrants studied at a Further Education College.

Student profile at Lincoln College

Contextual data illustrates that the typical Lincoln College HE student is male, of white-british ethnicity, aged 21 or older. 62% of the HE student population at the College is male, with 93% of white -British ethnicity and 57% ages 21 or over. 34% of students are from Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 or 2. The majority of students (84%) are local to the college and 59% have either low or non-tariff entry qualifications. The proportion of students from low socio-economic groups has remained stable with 33% of the new students that enrolled in 2018/19 having a declared household income below £25,000 per year. In addition to this 17% reported having a disability or support need, a figure which has increased by 4% since the 2016/17 academic year.

TEACHING QUALITY

Contact Time

Full time HE programmes are delivered over a weekly average of 12 contact hours with class sizes ranging from 6 to 30 students. Weekly contact hours include academic lectures, seminars, group and individual tutorial activities. Programme delivery is comprised of both theoretical and practical sessions in addition to individual tutorials to support dissertations and project work. Small class sizes and more intensive tutor support have been cited in a number of student surveys as being a strength of the HE provision at Lincoln College – specifically in the NSS as well as internal surveys such as the HE Part Time Student Survey (HE PTSS) and the HE 1st Impressions Survey.

LAT Strategy for Lincoln College and Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) activity

The Lincoln College learning, assessment and teaching (LAT) strategy was introduced in September 2016. The strategy recognises that learning, assessment and teaching are not mutually exclusive and the effectiveness of each is dependent on the others. It is centred around four key principles for inspiring delivery and exceptional learning:

1. Learning is inspiring, challenging and relevant to the needs and aspirations of each learner with a clear line of sight to employment and/or future learning.
2. Learning is planned effectively, including stakeholders contribution, to monitor and assess progress and develop core and employability skills however teachers, trainers and assessors have the confidence to adapt and react in the learning environment to maximise learning opportunities.
3. Effective pedagogical strategies (including the use of appropriate technologies) are used within the learning environment, and extend beyond it, to ensure all students' skill development and understanding is exceptional and students develop independence.
4. A wide range of challenging assessment methods are used that have a broad focus (academic, personal, employability skills etc.) Specific and timely feedback /forward that is valued and acted upon by students will follow assessment helping them to further develop their knowledge, skills and values.

These principles have been mapped to the Advance HE UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and academic staff are supported continually to evaluate their individual practice as part of an ongoing process of Continuous Professional Learning (CPL).

The strategy outlines a range of Observation of Learning Practices (OLP's) including:

- Learning walks
- Virtual learning walks
- Developmental Observations of Learning

LAT forms a central component of the College performance management and annual review processes, as each member of staff must discuss and agree an individual LAT action plan at the start of each academic year. This action plan is evaluated as part of a formal mid-year review and monthly as part of each departmental LAT meeting. Academic staff share best practice through monthly HE Forum meetings as well as having the opportunity to work with one of the cross-college Professional Standards Learning Coaches (PSLC's) for more targeted support and development.

There is a minimum requirement for each member of staff to log 30 hours of CPL throughout the year – these hours must be split evenly between pedagogy, industry and core skills. Staff are able to tailor their own CPL by attending workshops and training sessions on the set professional development and training days, they are also supported and encouraged to spend time in vocational settings to update their industry knowledge and practical skills. For HE staff the College has designated funds to support the completion of higher-level qualifications, which in turn facilitates knowledge generation within the institution. A number of existing staff have obtained HEA fellowship and there are also plans developing for 2019/20 to support more HE staff with applications in collaboration with one of our University partners.

At present 91% of the contracted academic staff who teach across our HE programmes hold recognised teaching qualifications, 78% of which are at level 5 or above and the processes in place for ensuring that staff are appropriately qualified was confirmed by QAA as part of the HER visit in March 2015.

Teaching excellence is recognised and rewarded in a number of ways. 'Learning and Teaching awards' are presented monthly to individuals who have been nominated for outstanding performance. Staff also receive rewards through Perkbox, alongside other bonuses and discounts that are available to everyone. Through Perkbox managers can send certificates, vouchers and prizes to reward strong performance at their discretion. Staff achievements are also formally celebrated at the Lincoln College annual awards ceremony - this includes both individual and team recognition of extraordinary performance.

Academic staff are encouraged and supported to share best practice, including their research findings or co-created work with students, as part of the following events:

- HE Forum
- Workplace HE scholarly activity group
- Professional development days
- The annual LAT conference
- Events and activities that form part of the annual LAT-fest (a week-long LAT focussed period of professional development)

Scholarly activity

As previously stated, Lincoln College has maintained its commitment to supporting academic staff to complete higher level qualifications – including PhD, Masters degree and vocational qualifications. Professional development

activity days allow academic staff to meet as part of the in order to share their experiences, to encourage those who might be interested in undertaking additional study in the future and to offer peer support to each other whilst actively studying. These group sessions also provide an opportunity to explore and implement ways in which this research activity can be used to enhance the experience of the HE students across the college, via direct contact in lectures and seminars or through cross-college events and activities. 2017/18 saw further developments including a collaborative HE student 'project showcase' event – which brought both foundation degree and honours degree students together with local employers and level 3 students at a poster presentation showcase. Students were able to talk about their projects and their findings, their experiences of degree level study and the impact that their studies have had in the context of their setting.

The students selected to present at this event worked closely with their project supervisors to produce an academic poster. They also worked collaboratively to produce an executive summary article for publication in a Lincoln College HE student research paper. This was published internally for staff and students to access and included the articles written by all of the students who were part of the showcase event.

Academic staff are encouraged and supported to publish their work. At present there are members of the Complementary Medicine team with multiple book publications and there are also a number of staff with journal editorial roles. More recently, staff have been supported to submit papers to the Scholarship framework for publication on their website and we have continued to work with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) by conducting two funded research projects since 2016/17.

Scholarly activity and research is highly valued across the organisation as it is a fundamental to facilitate a high quality teaching and learning experience for our students. Academic knowledge is developed alongside vocational skills and competencies to provide opportunities for graduates to be work-ready. It is therefore of equal importance that our academic staff maintain their vocational relevance and expertise. This is achieved by supporting academic staff to gain and maintain professional body membership and to continue to contribute to their vocational field. Examples of this include:

- Speaking at industry conferences and training events (in the UK and Internationally)
- Professional body membership responsibilities (council members, panel members for accreditation etc.)
- Moderation activities with other centres
- Continuation of professional practice (eg. as an Acupuncturist, Engineer or Sports Therapist)

At present there are academic staff members active within the following organisations:

- The British Acupuncture Accreditation Board
- The British Acupuncture Council
- The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture
- The European Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association
- The Unified Register of Herbal Practitioners
- The National Institute of Medical Herbalists
- The Sports Therapy Association
- The Football Association
- England Netball
- The Institute of Directors
- The Society of Education and Training
- The Chartered College of Teaching
- The National Association of Musical Instrument Repairers
- The National Association of Violin Makers

- The Piano Tuners Association
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council
- The Association of Photographers in Higher Education
- The Royal Photographic Association
- The Institution of Engineering Technology
- The Engineering Council
- The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple – Barrister (non-practising)
- British Education Research Association

The impact of our commitment to high quality teaching and learning can be seen through the National Student Survey (NSS). Student satisfaction with teaching and assessment has maintained a strong position with 93% of students reporting that staff are good at explaining things (4% higher than the national average) in the 2018 survey. This was further evidenced by the number of comments received as 88% make reference to the quality of teaching and the high levels of support provided by the academic staff.

'Very good teaching, very good communication. Very professional and patient.'

'The teaching staff are excellent and the course is well run.'

'The teaching support and the teacher's knowledge.'

95% of students reported that they found their course to be intellectually stimulating, which shows a 5% increase when compared to the previous year and is 10% higher than the national average. This feedback can also be triangulated with responses from the HE 1st Impressions Survey 2017 in which students reported that tutors were 'helpful, polite and understanding' and that they had experienced 'good teaching.'

The positive student feedback regarding teaching quality is substantiated further by a 1.5% increase in student pass rates between 2015/16 and 2017/18 with 94.5% of students successfully completing their programme of study. According to the most recently available National Achievement Rates (gov.uk) for further and higher education, skills and vocational training (2016/17) the average pass rates for HE qualifications was 89.6%.

Course level self-assessment of Learning, Assessment and Teaching is conducted by all course teams via the Annual Programme Monitoring Report (AMR) process. The HE Annual Monitoring Report then evaluates the overall position of LAT across the HE provision and draws out common areas of strength, areas for development and examples of good practice. Feedback from External Examiners provides external recognition of the high standards of teaching quality across our provision, and student feedback is also captured within the course level AMR's to provide evidence of satisfaction with teaching and learning:

The transformation of students from novices at the beginning of year 1 to confident independent practitioners ready to work in primary care is well captured in the reflective writing students append to their case studies throughout the three years of their clinical training and this demonstrates the close support received from clinicians to ensure their fitness to practice and ability to operate within the limits of competence expected from herbal professional bodies. (EE for BSc(Hons) Herbal Medicine)

The tutors were very supportive throughout the course and ensured that we had the necessary information required. (Student rep feedback; BSc(Hons) Sports Coaching, Development and Pedagogy)

Staff are up to date within the currency of the field which is relayed within the programme delivery and learning context. (EE for FdSc Sports Therapy, Health and Fitness)

The presentation of the sample and the overall standard of student work is very good, the centre is delivering high level technical units at both level 4 and 5. Students working in industry comment very positively about the level

of technical delivery, support from staff and an overall very positive learning experience. (EE for HNC Construction and Civil Engineering)

Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation

At present there are 3 programmes with full PSRB accreditation. The Clinical Herbalism degree has been accredited by the European Herbal & Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association (EHTPA) since 2002, the Acupuncture degree has been accredited by the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) since 2008 and the FdSc Sports Therapy and Rehabilitation has been accredited by the Sports Therapy Association (STA) since 2012. Professional accreditation enables students that graduate from these programmes to transition directly into clinical practice, which is a contributing factor to the strong DLHE results that we have seen for a number of years. Professional accreditation also ensures that academic staff maintain up to date industry knowledge and skills in order to deliver and assess to the required professional standards. The impact of PSRB accreditation can be seen in the positive student outcomes with 28% of graduates from the Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture degrees achieving a 1st class honours in 2017/18 with a further 44% all achieving a 2:1 classification. DLHE data from 2016/17 showed that 100% of graduates from the Acupuncture programme were in employment and/or further study within 6 months of completing their degree; 80% of the Herbal Medicine graduates were in employment (4 graduates of the cohort reported doing 'something else'); and 100% of the Sports Therapy graduates were in employment and/or further study.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Lincoln and Newark Campuses provide HE students with a range of study environments; including specialist laboratory, workshop and practical spaces, well equipped classrooms and multiple group and private study areas. 'The college has wide variety of resources to use such as the library, and all of the facilities in Dean's Building such as the gym and sports hall are great for the delivery of content' (NSS; 2018). Students have access to specialist equipment and practical spaces by booking these facilities with the school administrators, and a number of students choose to purchase specific pieces of equipment for themselves using their career degree bursary allocation. NSS responses for academic support have been maintained consistently above the sector averages for the past 5 consecutive years with satisfaction at 84% in 2017/18 (6% above the sector and regional averages). Satisfaction with organisation and management has also tracked above the sector average for the past 2 years (by 4% in 2016/17 and 2% in 2017/18). This follows on from the introduction of a cross college HE course coordination and tutorial model at the start of 2016/17.

ILT and Library Infrastructure

The college has continued to invest in the Information and Learning Technology (ILT) infrastructure following the implementation of the ILT strategy in 2013. There has been substantial development of new ILT resources across the college including development of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle and continued investment in specific software for HE such as SPSS and Turn It In. The supportive Library staff have been mentioned a number of times in the qualitative comments received from students in the most recent NSS as well as the internal surveys previously mentioned. 'The teachers and all the library [staff] at the college have been fantastic.' Students have also commented positively on the range of resources available and the general learning environments across the college:

'Helpful staff, a different learning style as I do a weekend course and the resources in the e-Library are pretty good.'

'The college has wide variety of resources to use such as the library and all of the facilities in Dean's Building such as the gym and sports hall are great for the delivery of content.'

'Good teachers. Great study environment on the acupuncture course.'

The Library team produce a separate action plan in response to the HE survey data collected throughout each academic year and they work closely with the ILT support team to ensure that students have reliable access to online resources whilst working remotely. Over the past 3 years the library team have also worked closely with the student representatives to:

- Address specific feedback regarding stock of particular titles or access issues when working remotely
- Manage expectations regarding access to libraries and online resources at validating partner institutions
- Ensure that all students are aware of the library support services (eg. 1:1 study support sessions, group referencing support sessions, induction plus)

Although student satisfaction with library resources is 3% below the regional and sector averages, the 2017/18 survey results show a 24% increase on the previous year and highlight the impact of this heightened focus over the past 3 years.

3 year data for NSS satisfaction 'the library resources have supported my learning well'			
NSS survey year	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Satisfaction	83.3%	59.2%	51%
Sector average	86.5%	86.4%	87%

Pastoral Support and Student Retention

The contextual student profile of those studying HE at Lincoln College shows that a large proportion of students come from disadvantaged areas with low participation in HE. The majority of students enrol with low or non-tariff entry qualifications and a significant proportion declare a low annual household income. As a result of these factors a significant number of students (approximately 76%) remain in employment whist studying. With the majority of students aged 21 or above there is a high number of students with children or dependants – which often makes it difficult to balance academic study with attendance at College and the demands of family life. Tutor support, alongside the broader support offered by Student Services, is therefore vital in ensuring that students are given the best possible chance of success.

The use of Promonitor has now become embedded practice and the system is used to track and monitor student attendance and progress across all HE courses. Students have fully integrated access to their records via the VLE platform. The increase in continuation (5% higher than the previous year) provides strong evidence that this approach is having a significant impact.

In addition to the use of Promonitor 2017/18 saw the introduction of HE Progress Board meetings. Course teams were required to complete a risk profile for every student in advance of the meetings by considering attendance, conduct and overall progress which generated a traffic-light rating based on professional experience and history. Students identified as being an amber (moderate) or red (high) risk were discussed at the progress board meeting held in January and actions were agreed for additional support and interventions to be arranged in partnership with the student services team. 83 students were identified as being at risk of withdrawal or failure and discussed as part of this process (representing 18% of the HE student population). The completion data for these students at the end of the academic year can be seen below:

- 59 students completed the year with a positive outcome (pass or progress) which represents 71% of those identified as being at moderate or high risk
- 4 of the 59 students completed their qualification with a high grade (Merit, distinction, 2:1 or 1st)

Progress boards have been scheduled for the 2018/19 academic year and a number of our partner HEI contacts have requested to attend these meetings in order to share good practice within their own institutions.

Learner voice

There is a well-established formal HE student representative system in addition to course level mechanisms (such as Course Committee Meetings, End of Unit Feedback Questionnaires and opportunities to meet with external examiners and link tutors). The cross-college HE student representatives meet every 6 weeks throughout the academic year and they are responsible for ensuring that information is cascaded to students across all HE courses. These meetings are also attended by representatives from the college support teams – such as ICT, library and facilities – in order to address any issues as quickly as possible.

HE student representation is part of every deliberative board including monthly HE Forum meetings, Academic Affairs Committee meetings, Quality Standards Committee and the College Board of Governors. Representation through these committees ensures that students are able to influence decisions and contribute to the development of policies, processes and systems in order to ensure that the student experience is prioritised at all levels. This includes curriculum development and approval, marketing activities and events, facility development and survey analysis. The HE student rep group have been instrumental in shaping the new HE Strategy for 2020 by determining our Lincoln College 'Graduate attributes' and contributing to the strategic objectives and performance indicators. This group also independently produced a student review document as part of the 2015 QAA self-evaluation submission.

Feedback from the most recent NSS confirms that students can see clearly how feedback has been acted upon (satisfaction 6% above the sector average) and that staff value students views and opinions about the course (1% above the sector average). However, student satisfaction with having the right opportunities to provide feedback was 5% below the sector average. As a result of this we are working closely with the student representatives to identify a broader range of mechanisms for students to provide feedback and to analyse the effectiveness of some of the existing opportunities. Comments received through the NSS also confirm that academic feedback is highly valued by the students with particular praise for how quickly work was returned and the easy access to tutors when in need of assignment support.

Digital connectivity

Students have remote access at all times to the College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle. There is a set of minimum standards for all HE programmes to ensure that the information provided to students is accurate, current and contributes positively to their learning experience. Moodle is audited by the College Quality Coordinator twice during the academic year to ensure that the minimum standards are being met, and HE student reps are asked to comment on their Moodle pages as part of the cross college meetings. External Examiners and University Link Tutors audit Moodle as part of their annual monitoring processes and we have received a number of positive comments regarding the range of activities available and the high level of student engagement with the VLE. As well as providing information at course-level Moodle is also home to the 'HE Information Centre' – an area where students can access all of the cross college HE information and documentation in one place. This includes key contacts, policies and procedures, regulations, HE Annual Monitoring Reports and HE student rep meeting minutes.

Course teams are encouraged to communicate with students through a variety of mechanisms, including social media channels. A number of course teams have Facebook groups set up for students and staff to access. These perform a 'message board' function as well as providing a mechanism for the quick dissemination of reading materials and discussion topics. HE student reps from a number of courses, including Lens Based Media, Herbal Medicine and Sport, have commented on the value of these groups in making students feel part of a community and integrating new cohorts into the college. Twitter is also used to promote a more public profile of the College and the HE programmes, enabling students to access a network of industry specialists and experts who regularly share research findings and current activity. More recently the College has launched MyDay, which is a smart phone app that allows students to access a range of personalised information such as their timetable, target grades, attendance details and student discounts. The app links also to the College Twitter and Facebook feeds, ensuring that live information is available at all times and that key messages are communicated quickly and effectively. Feedback from the HE student rep group regarding the MyDay app has been extremely positive and they have offered a number of useful suggestions for additional features that could be integrated into the app in the future.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

HE students can access independent advice and guidance (IAG) at any time by contacting a member of the Guidance Team within Student Services. Advice and guidance can also be sought from academic and personal tutors regarding careers within the industry that they are studying currently. Individual 1:1 tutorial meetings offer an opportunity to discuss career progression at regular points throughout the academic year and tutors can refer students to the Guidance Team as required. NSS results show that student satisfaction with advice and guidance is high, with the quality and timeliness of the advice and guidance performing 5% and 9% above the sector averages in these areas. DLHE data from 2016/17 graduates shows that 98.2% of part time and 93% of full time graduates were in employment or further study in the 6 months following completion of their course.

Employment and Further Study

94% of part time HE students at Lincoln College study on sub-degree programmes with 69% of students age 21 or older. The vast majority of these students are enrolled on Higher National (HN) programmes in mechanical, electrical, construction or civil engineering and over 90% of these cohorts consist of students that are being supported by their employers to complete technical level 4 (HNC) qualifications in response to their business needs and skills requirements. We have continued to maintain strong and positive relationships with a number of large employers from across the region including Siemens, RTS, Lincolnshire County Council, City of Lincoln Council, Lindum Construction and Gelders Group. As a result of these relationships and, in response to employer demand and requirements, the number of students that continue on to HND (level 5) qualifications following completion of the HNC is small (typically 5% or less) and students are most likely to continue working with their existing employer. Whilst these students may be technically qualified to progress within their organisation it is likely that they will continue within their existing job role for an extended period in order to gain the broader industry skills and experience required specifically by the organisation. Consequently the proportion of part time students that progress on to highly-skilled employment or further study within a 6 month period is lower than the full time student equivalent with 73.5% over a 3 year average (DLHE). The research conducted as part of the TEF analysis of highly skilled employment outcomes shows that HEI's with low tariff entry scores are more likely to have a negative flag in this area than any other provider, also recognising the statistical significance of the type of degree obtained. This figure has, however, continued to improve incrementally since 2012/13 with an 11.1% overall increase by 2016/17 as a result of more targeted support and advice for students that have joined us to study independently in order to encourage and facilitate their progression onto HND and top-up level 6 programmes elsewhere.

Student support

Alongside their academic programme all HE students have access to a pastoral support model that includes both compulsory (4 times per year) and optional sessions that are designed to support student progress or to develop generic skills and attributes. Students are allocated a personal tutor as part of their induction programme and this tutor stays with them for the duration of their studies. These meetings are recorded on Promonitor and include a review of both academic progress and pastoral support requirements. At the start of their programme students work with their personal tutor to set targets for completion over the academic year – these might be specifically related to the achievement of aspirational grades, or broader developmental goals regarding generation of knowledge or demonstration of skills. These targets are reviewed formally as part of the scheduled individual tutorials. NSS results from 2018 show that 84% of students were satisfied with the academic support that they received (5% higher than the regional and sector averages). Student also have access to the full range of services offered by our Student Services department. This includes:

- Mental health support and counselling services
- Financial support and advice (such as access to hardship funds and support with making financial applications for support elsewhere)
- Independent careers advice and guidance services
- Peer support groups eg. LGBT community

In 2017/18 80 HE students declared a disability, learning difficulty or health problem; this represents 17% of the HE student population and indicates an increase of 4% since the previous year. Of those that declared an additional support need 61% actively engaged with the services offered by the College, which is unchanged from the previous year. At the start of 2016/17 a HE Assessment and Support Coordinator was introduced to the Student Services team to work with HE students to access appropriate support and to monitor the effectiveness of the support put in place. As a result of this appointment the achievement and/or continuation outcomes of students with a declared disability or support need has increased significantly from 66% in 2015/16 to 89% in 2017/18. It is anticipated that the number of students with declared disabilities and support needs will continue to increase year on year in line with the national trend which suggests that, at present, 1 in 4 people report having a mental health problem of one type or another (Mind; 2019). By offering a holistic pastoral support model HE students at Lincoln College are monitored closely throughout their time with us, ensuring that they have access to the specific support that they need at any given time in order to maximise their potential for achievement and progression. Analysis of achievement data from the past 3 years indicates that students who engage with pastoral support are more likely to pass or progress onto the next stage of their programme. Consequently, students are expected to attend a minimum number of individual tutorials throughout the academic year and these are included in the course timetable at every level.

All staff members have up-to-date safeguarding training and students are also encouraged to be vigilant of safeguarding issues amongst their peer groups. In 2017/18 Lincoln College received grant funding from HEFCE to run a campus safeguarding project. The aim of this project was to develop mechanisms by which HE students could access information, report incidents and keep themselves safe whilst on campus. Part of the funding was used to develop a mobile phone 'app' that students can use to report periods of lone working across the campus via a live 'check-in' function that reports directly to the campus warden. This enables the campus security team to monitor students who are lone working across the campus and to ensure that their safety and welfare is maintained. The project funding also enabled the development and production of a range of resources, such as wallet-sized information cards, that are issued to all students as part of their induction programme. The funding also enabled a number of HE student reps to access safeguarding qualifications in order to disseminate information across their

peer groups and model good practice when keeping themselves safe. Results from the 2017/18 cross-college Learner Voice Survey show that 93% of respondents felt that they, and their property, were safe whilst at College. This figure represents a 4% increase when compared to the 2016/17 academic year and suggests that the activities outlined above have had a positive impact on student safety.

Demographic context and graduate mobility factors

The introduction of a HE Schools Liaison Officer in 2015 enabled us to attribute a greater focus on the operational aspects of our Access and Widening Participation Plans. Since 2012/13 our widening participation targets have focused specifically on widening our outreach location profile and increasing student recruitment from:

- neighbouring local authorities where the number of young people in HE and adults with HE qualifications falls into the bottom national percentile
- residual households with an annual income below £25,000
- those with non-standard entry criteria (entrants with a highest level of qualification on entry at level 2 or below)

In order to address these target areas the HE Schools Liaison Officer has developed and delivered an operational plan that has included:

- Bespoke HE taster days with a number of schools across the region
- Bespoke HE open days and open evening events throughout the academic year
- Bespoke HE careers talks (both externally and internally across the College)
- HE information and advice at FE parents evenings
- A programme of activities aimed at year 5 and 6 (key stage 2) students to raise aspirations, increase awareness of the College as an institution and to explore career development opportunities that require HE-level qualifications

Of the 24 wards surrounding Lincoln 14 have young participation in HE rates in Polar4 Quintiles 1 or 2 with participation ranging from 14.5% to 31.6%. Since 2012/13 the number of students recruited from these areas has shown an increase of 71% with a marked increase from 34 students in 2014/15 to 93 students in 2016/17. Analysis of our data around the success of students from low participation neighbourhoods tells us that 53% of students enrolled on a course due to complete in 2016/17 completed and went into employment, 42% continued to further study and only 5% withdrew from their qualification.

Since 2012/13 we have successfully increased the number of outreach locations that we work with from 14 to 29 in 2015/16, 45 in 2016/17 and this remained constant at 44 during 2017/18. This has enabled us to run a wider range of activities and events, including more targeted activities with parents and adults. By working closely with out NNCO consortia (LincHigher) we have also been able to access additional funding to enhance the range of activities offered on our own campuses, including more subject-specific taster days and a more active presence at open days and parents evenings.

We have significantly increased the volume of activity with our internal Further Education students to promote progression to HE at college. The HE Schools Liaison Officer visited 22 tutorial groups during 2016/17 and has increased this to 43 tutorial sessions during 2017/18 which includes Level 3 students from both year 1 and 2. Recognition of the need for students to discuss HE after an HE progression tutorial has been addressed this academic year with training for the Personal Progression Coaches around the benefits of continuing to HE at college. This will allow further discussion with students as and when required. From the HE 1st Impressions survey we can see the impact of this from 37% of students hearing about HE progression at college during 16/17 to 62% in 17/18.

Career degrees and career support

The 'career degree' model continues to be a central focus feature of the HE provision at Lincoln College. The core purpose of a 'Career Degree' is to enable students to develop a set of holistic qualifications and skills that make them more attractive to employers. The model was developed following extensive engagement with a consortium of local and regional employers in order to establish a set of commonly agreed graduate attributes. Alongside their main academic qualification (such as an honours degree, a HNC or a Foundation Degree) students can access up to £500 per year to spend on additional 'bolt on' qualifications, activities or resources of their choice. These may take the form of vocational or industry recognised qualifications (eg. L2 Gym Instructor, First Aid, Safeguarding), events / activities (eg. workshops, conferences, visits) or specialist equipment and resources (eg. Computer software, membership of a professional body, camera equipment). Students are also required through their academic programmes to complete compulsory work placements and work-based assessments in order to gain valuable industry experience. Collectively this approach ensures that graduates are suitably qualified, skilled and prepared for employment by the end of their 'Career Degree' at Lincoln College.

The 'career degree' model has been widely praised by a number of our validating partners as being a significant enhancement to the student experience. This has also been echoed by External Examiners and student feedback.

The curriculum offer continues to support the 'Career Degree' model by ensuring that all courses include modules with a distinctive focus on employability skills or professional practice. Where possible the assignments written within academic modules have a strong vocational focus and a large proportion require an element of employer engagement or work placement in order for students to complete them. High levels of employer engagement have, without doubt, contributed to the increased confidence and communication levels reported by students in NSS and should be considered as evidence of learning gain.

Students continue to receive additional study skills support from the designated 'Learning Advisors' within the Library. Group sessions are planned and delivered with the learning advisors as part of the induction process and, following on from these sessions, students can then arrange to meet with the earning advisors on a 1:1 basis to access more tailored support. This includes proof reading and assignment support, referencing and researching as well as data analysis and assignment presentation. NSS feedback with regard to these members of staff has been consistently positive:

'Library staff [are] really helpful and supportive.'

'The library staff are excellent and work tirelessly to help students access the resources they need.'

Since 2017/18, the College has worked to develop a range of broader cross-college opportunities for HE students to develop their employability skills. This concept has been further developed for 2018/19 with the introduction of a 'Preparation for Self Employment' day that is open to final year students and recent graduates from all HE programmes across the College. The event has been designed to introduce students to a range of organisations that support small and independent businesses (such as the LEP, the Chamber of Commerce and City Ex), there are also a number of guest speakers and practical workshops to enable students to grasp some of the fundamental skills required to establish a start-up company. The post-event evaluation will determine the nature of any changes for subsequent years, but it is anticipated that this will form the first in a series of similarly designed events to support students to prepare themselves for the next stage in their career.

CONCLUSION

The current Higher Education Strategy and its associated sponsorship at Board level has driven significant financial, human and pedagogical investment in the student experience. The impact is high learning gain, strong student satisfaction with teaching and academic support and high levels of progression to employment or further study. Moreover, the embedded practices and enhancements allow for sustainability of performance, creating space to evolve our career degree methodology to better encompass self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Students on HE programmes at Lincoln College achieve positive academic outcomes and transition successfully into employment or further study with a wide range of industry-recognised skills. We are employer responsive and work hard to ensure that we meet the requirements of our trusted and long-standing business partners whilst supporting the students to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and resilience required by industry. Our teaching staff are highly qualified and committed to supporting and inspiring students to achieve, developing a curriculum that fosters enquiry, action research and innovation.

'The course has significantly enhanced my levels of confidence and ability to work independently, building on my skills gained from my previous job to enable me to become qualified and work within my preferred career as a sports coach. I am very pleased with the support and advice I have received which I had received gratefully to help me make the informed decisions that I feel I need to make for my future.'

(FdSc Sports Coaching, Education and Development graduate; NSS 2017/18)